

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT

Scott Press Release



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HIGHLAND PARK PARTNERSHIP PUTS KIDS FIRST *Sen. Scott Salutes Work of Task Force*

(LANSING) – Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park) is proud to serve as a member of the Highland Park Early Childhood Task Force, created to help bridge Highland Park schools with “partners” in the community.

Well into its second year, a collaborative group has been working to provide “a great start for every child in Highland Park – safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and life,” as provided for in its Vision Statement.

Often-times children in economically-deprived households must overcome cognitive, social, emotional, and physical challenges that can impede their ability to learn. By identifying and providing an array of educational and social services to children and their families, the goal of the task force is to promote the general well-being and school readiness of Highland Park children, which in turn can lead to success later on in life.

“It is heartening to see such an outpouring of support from so many caring individuals,” said Sen. Scott. “On behalf of the families and children of Highland Park, I salute the compassion and hard work of every member of the task force.”

One example of real progress being made through the work of the task force includes a donation in the amount of \$45,000 to the Highland Park School District for books, teacher training and technology. Through its philanthropic arm, The Wright Group, international book publisher McGraw-Hill donated the money under a two-year McGraw-Hill pilot project. It was the strong relationship and collaboration between the task force and the Highland Park School District that made this contribution possible.

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“The Wright Group’s donation will buy us lots of books,” said Dr. Jonella A. Mongo, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Professional Development at Highland Park Schools. “Our children deserve the best we have to offer them. The collaborative efforts of the task force have been crucial in helping to identify and locate important programs and financial resources for the children and families of Highland Park.”

Another significant initiative helping children and families in Highland Park includes the opening last year of the Family Resource Center at Cortland Academy. Just one of 39 centers in the state, the establishment of Family Resource Centers in schools throughout the state was a top priority of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm.

“Family Resource Centers help children meet high standards by bringing the assistance that families need directly to them,” said Governor Granholm. “Each center pools community resources of local agencies so that families can more efficiently access services. The collaboration helps families and students get the important services they need while allowing teachers and school officials to concentrate on their most important duty – educating tomorrow’s leaders.”

Administered through the state Family Independence Agency (FIA), Family Resource Centers offer families vital services through FIA staff that are housed on-site in the school building.

“Our staff members and those from affiliated agencies act as central coordination points for families with children in the schools,” said FIA Director Marianne Udow. “These are priority services for our agency that we believe provide early intervention and prevent longer-term consequences for children and families.”

As task force member and Michigan Head Start-State Collaboration Director, Nancy Willyard, so eloquently stated, “real help for our children doesn’t happen without collaboration.”

The type of dedication shown by task force members – and the deeds to back it up – is what gives our children a solid foundation. Thanks to the work of the Highland Park Early Childhood Task Force, our young people are on the right path to bright and shining futures.

Along with Sen. Scott, task force membership includes individuals from Wayne County Health & Family Services, Michigan Department of Education, Family Independence Agency, Michigan Head Start Association, Highland Park Schools, Wayne County RESA, Michigan 4C Association, Wayne State University, and Wayne Metro Head Start.

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Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.